

The Bethel Courier.

Volume XI, Number 1

Spring 1987

Bethel Historical Society



Randall H. Bennett (center) autographs a copy of his book OXFORD COUNTY, MAINE: A GUIDE TO ITS HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE while Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Director of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (left) and Society President Alden T. Kennett look on at the author's reception held on Valentine's Day. Photo courtesy of Donald S. Brown.

SOCIETY SPONSORS AUTHOR'S RECEPTION FOR OXFORD COUNTY ARCHITECTURE BOOK

Over one hundred persons braved freezing temperatures to attend an author's reception on Valentine's Day held in the meeting room of the Dr. Moses Mason House in honor of Randall H. Bennett's OXFORD COUNTY, MAINE: A GUIDE TO ITS HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE. A project of more than five years in the making, the book is the final product of the Oxford County Historic Resource Survey, which was sponsored by the Bethel Historical Society with the support of federal funds granted by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. The 384 page book, featuring over one thousand entries and over four hundred photographs, documents the County's historic architecture from modest timber-framed 18th century houses to imposing Beaux Arts commercial structures. Printed on acid-free paper, the volume also includes a brief historical overview of the forty-two towns, plantations and townships in the county as well as a selective bibliography dealing with Oxford County, the first of its kind to be published.

The reception was opened by welcoming remarks from Trustee Chairman Margaret Joy Tibbetts and by President Alden Kennett, who addressed those present and thanked everyone who had contributed to the success of this publication. They praised the work and dedication of the author, Randall Bennett, who also serves as the Society's Curator of Collections and expressed deepest gratitude to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission for its grant support in making the project possible. Society Director Stanley R. Howe, who supervised the administration of this grant, also thanked everyone who had worked as volunteers in assembling information for this book and for their support of the project. He also expressed deepest gratitude to the Commission and to its director Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr. for his support. Dr. Howe introduced Rachel Godbout, representing Smith and Town of Berlin, New Hampshire, who printed the book, and thanked her for all the cooperation experienced in the production of this volume. The director then introduced Mr. Shettleworth, who in his remarks described the book as a "remarkable

(continued on page 2)

(Book reception, continued from page 1)

achievement" and "excellent in every respect — content, format, and graphics." He predicted that the book would "set the standard for the other fifteen counties." In response, Mr. Bennett thanked Mr. Shettleworth for his kind remarks and added his appreciation to all who assisted with the production of the book. Mr. Bennett then spent the afternoon autographing copies of his book and receiving congratulations on his achievement.

The reception, organized by Persis Post of the Special Projects Committee, was also highlighted by a formal tea, which featured many Valentine treats. Much appreciation is extended to all those Society members who contributed food and otherwise assisted to make the day such a success.

BOOK REVIEW

OXFORD COUNTY, MAINE: A GUIDE TO ITS HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE. By Randall H. Bennett. (Bethel, Maine: Oxford County Historic Resource Survey, 1987. Pp. xxii, 562. Paper. \$18.)

"The greatest glory of a building is not in its stones, but in its age — in that deep sense of voicefulness, of watching, of sympathy, which we feel in walls that have long been washed by passing waves of humanity . . ."

— John Ruskin, 19th Century critic

All of us who have loved or lived in an old building know that feeling, and the same spirit speaks from every page of this long-awaited guide to Oxford County's heritage, historical, cultural and architectural.

Seven years in the making, this final fruit of the Oxford County Historic Resource Survey is, in its own words, not a "comprehensive" but certainly an "extensive" overview — at 600 pages, 400 photos and 1000 entries — of the significant sites and buildings in Maine's most mountainous and westernmost county, from its oldest (Fryeburg) to its oddest (West Paris) to one actually under water (Aziscohos). Well-researched, well-written, and attractively packaged, the result is an example of local history at its richest and finest. This book is one of a kind, and should set the standard for all of its kind to follow.

In the best sense, this is much more than a book about old buildings. Its theme is the significance of buildings as an expression of lives, and from barns to Beaux Arts storefronts Oxford County's "built environment" tells a rich story of what one diverse and self-reliant culture made in one of Maine's most remote and rural areas. Most sites treated are therefore 19th century, that energetic era when our own age was born. From Oxford County homes went forth many who made that century: industrialist Hugh Chisholm's "Strathglass" (Rumford Falls), the planned "City in the Wilderness"; the home of Rufus Ingalls (Denmark) Paymaster of the Union Army in the Civil War; the birthplace of John D. Long (Buckfield) a kindly Dickensian grandfather who, as McKinley's Secretary of the

EDITOR'S CORNER

Readers will undoubtedly notice that the masthead for this issue of the COURIER differs from those of the past. It seemed appropriate as we begin our second decade of publication that some changes in the appearance of the COURIER would be appropriate. Other changes are anticipated and suggestions as well as comments are always welcome.

SRH

Navy, took long afternoon naps while Assistant Secretary Teddy Roosevelt marched America into the Spanish-American War.

All that is here, and much more. Author Randall H. Bennett, the Bethel Historical Society's Curator of Collections, brings more than a decade of research to bear in brief but detailed histories that preface each of the 42 towns and plantations covered. Towns are treated alphabetically, with a picture and paragraph for each entry therein. A bibliography of historic citations for each town follows. Taken together, these represent the only "town history" ever written for many communities, and are themselves valuable historical contributions.

The largest towns (Fryeburg, Norway) are featured in a score of entries or more, smaller towns (Parkertown, Township C) in only one. But for all, the photos and maps are instructive; a knowledge of architectural terms is useful but not necessary, thanks to Bennett's lucid prose. The old buildings speak well for themselves, and both aficionados of architecture, and fans of the old home town will find much to admire.

Change is, of course, the only constant. Since this book went to press (1985) the North Waterford Church (pg. 474) has been added to the National Register; the Norway Elementary School (pg. 291) has been razed; and uncounted others "condoized." The 20th Century's legacy is already questionable (the survey's cut-off date is 1930) and, notes Bennett, "The hour is already late for many buildings included in these pages."

As Ruskin wrote, old buildings speak, but we must be willing to listen. Much of Oxford County's best remains today not because it has been carefully preserved, but because it has been basically ignored. Can a no-longer-remote county with its roots in the 19th Century keep its character against the commercial pressures of the 20th?

The question is an ongoing one, and Bennett and the Bethel Historical Society have stated it well in this outstanding book, both a remarkable record of the past and a fine challenge for the future.

Herbert Adams

A resident of Portland, Society member Herbert Adams is an Oxford County native whose historical articles frequently appear in the MAINE SUNDAY TELEGRAM.

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

John Ballentine, Somersworth, NH, is the publisher of New England History Press. **Laurence Bartlett**, Bethel, is retired and a generous donor to the Society. **Jeanne T. Bletzer**, Woodstock, VT, is descended from several of Bethel's oldest families. **Thomas** and **Wendy Ford**, Bethel, are teachers at Gould Academy and Crescent Park School respectively. **Robert L. Greenleaf**, Scituate, RI, is a Bethel native, now retired from teaching. **Harry** and **Barbara Kuzyk**, Bethel, are retired and have long been active in the Society. **Elizabeth Lord**, Bethel, is a retired teacher, an avid genealogist, and a popular craftswoman at various Society festivals. **John** and **Jane Champe Payne**, Baltimore, MD and Hanover, ME. He is a physician and she is a descendant of some of Oxford County's earliest families. **Kenneth** and **Sarah Ramage**, Bethel, live on Paradise Road. **Frank** and **Janet Vogt**, Bethel, live on Broad Street. He is a former Gould faculty member and she has been very active as a guide in the Society's museum and on the Garden and Grounds Committee. **Barbara Willey**, Portsmouth, NH, is a descendant of one of Bethel's earliest families, the Twitchells.

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY COMMITTEES 1986-87

BUILDING

E. M. Quinn, Chairman; Richard Verville; George Noll; Julia Brown; Rodney Howe; James Yarnell; Fred McMillin; Donald autour.

GARDEN AND GROUNDS

Sudie Vachon, Chairman; Gertrude Hutchins; Arthur Cummings; Margaret Tibbetts; Jane Vogt; Harry Kuzyk; Joy Yarnell; Emily Saunders; Geraldine Howe; Katherine Bennett; Theresa Perry; Josephine Monahan; Mary Beth Bayerlein; Lynda Chandler; Arlene Lowell.

EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Alvin Barth, Chairman; Rosalind Chapman; Elizabeth Smith; Judy Haskell; Randall Bennett; Sue Wight; Jane Hosterman; Virginia Kelly; Catherine Newell; Paul McGuire; Marvin Ouwinga; Frank Vogt.

PROGRAM

Helen Morton, Chairman; Geraldine Howe; Karen Brown; Ernest Perkins; Maxine Brown; Norman Clanton; Earlon Paine; John Bayerlein; Richard Hosterman; Sally Rollinson.

MUSEUM

Judy Haskell, Chairman; Frances Harding; Agnes Haines; Rosalind Chapman; Floribel Haines; Ruth Wight; Sylvia Clanton; Barbara H. Brown; Barbara Douglass; Mildred Thomas.

INVESTMENT

Margaret Joy Tibbetts, Chairman; Edmond J. Vachon; Royden Keddy; Louise Lincoln; John Head; Wilfred Conary; Howard Cole; Mary Keniston; Alden Kennett.

CRAFT

Catherine Newell, Chairman; Hope Tibbetts; Marlene Marshall; Carolyn Campbell; Janet Todd; Lynda Chandler; Alden Kennett; Edward Kennett.

MUSIC

Arlene Brown, Chairman; Mary Valentine; Edna York; Arlene Walker; Edward H. Hastings; Stephen Seames; Vicky Myers.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Persis Post, Chairman; Carolyn Brooks; Sarah Stevens; Edna York; Julia Brown; Sylvia Wight; Gloria Snyder; Mary Keniston; Olive Anderson; Christine Greenleaf; James Anderson; Norris Brown.

GENEALOGICAL

Agnes Haines, Chairman; Alden Kennett; Floribel Haines; Nancy H. Mercer; Judy Barker; Gloria Snyder; Mabel Kennett; Mariann Durgin; Neva Coolidge; Mary Keniston; Jane Hosterman.

MEMBERSHIP

Barbara D. Brown, Chairman; Jean Owen; Margaret Cousins; E. M. Quinn; Merton Brown; Jeri Brooks.

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

Mildred Jackson, Chairman; Hazel Newell; Phyllis Roberts; E. Dick Hastings; Barbara Kuzyk; Marie Brown; Ernest Perkins; Nancy Mercer.

(continued on page 4)

IN MEMORIAM

Died March 7, 1987 in Dunnellon, FL, Helen Hillier, life member of the Society.

Died April 11, 1987 in Danvers, MA, Ernestine Philbrook Jackson, member since 1966 and generous donor.

Died May 22, 1987 in Rumford, ME, Mary Carroll, generous donor.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

This year's annual Heritage Day was an unparalleled success. I never cease to be amazed at the diversity of talent and skill we have among our membership and in the community. The craftspeople this year were just superb. An added feature this winter was the presence of representatives from several historical societies who occupied booths with their publications during the afternoon. I wish to formally thank all who made Heritage Day such a success.

A well-attended reception for our Curator of Collections Randall Bennett and his new book on the architecture of Oxford County was held on Valentine's Day. This publication has received highly favorable reviews, including one in the MAINE SUNDAY TELEGRAM, and is exceeding expectations in sales.

Those of us who dwell in the valley of the Androscoggin River will long remember this spring the flood of 1987. While this one did not have the ice jams that characterized the flood of 1936, I'm certain that it is an event that will be remembered and discussed for years to come.

Finally, since I came to office two and one half years ago, the Society has been the recipient of numerous and varied artifacts and other gifts too numerous to mention individually. Both members and non-members have contributed many exceptional items for which the Society is deeply grateful. What better way to preserve antiquities and increase enjoyment than by sharing them with others. Perhaps the words of Thomas Fuller, 17th century English divine, apply here: "When thou makest presents, let them be of such things as will last long; to the end they may be in some sort immortal, and may frequently refresh the memory of the receiver."

Alden T. Kennett

REFLECTIONS ON A HALF CENTURY

(continued from Winter 1986 issue)

by Leslie E. Davis

Grandfather Davis was a very strict man, and I understand deeply religious. I have been told that he didn't allow any work or amusement of any sort on Sunday and that his religion was not what could be called a happy one, but that he certainly practiced what he believed, and expected his family to do likewise.

My father, Sumner Prescott Davis was born January 25, 1863 in the town of Greenwood, Maine, although I do not know what section of the town Grandfather lived. Father never said very much about his boyhood, but I expect it was the usual busy experience of most farm boys of that time. He did tell me of wearing copper toed shoes made by his father, and how very cold his feet usually got in the winter because, like all growing children, his feet grew too large for his shoes before the shoes wore out, and people didn't feel that they could afford to supply new shoes as long as the ones they had were wearable.

Boys of father's generation were kept busy with the endless amount of chores to be done on the average small farm. I know, because we had them in my generation too. Boys, and often girls, were expected to learn to milk cows by the time they were eight or nine years old, and each one was assigned at least one or two which they were expected to milk morning and night every day.

(continued on page 6)

ENDOWMENT

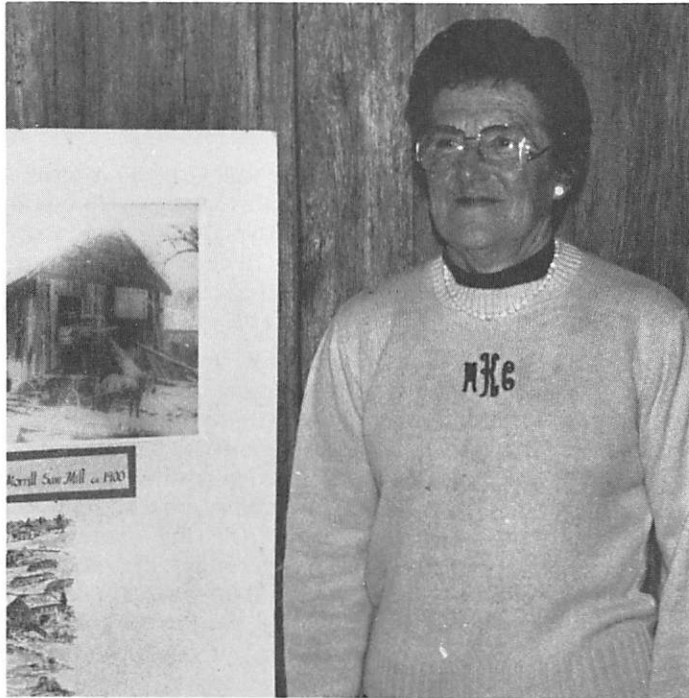
Howard Cole, Chairman; Barbara D. Brown; John B. Head; Louise Lincoln; Alden Kennett.

ART

Katherine Bennett, Chairman; Donald G. Bennett; Catherine Newell; Helen Morton; Sue Wight.

LONG RANGE PLANNING

James Monahan, Chairman; Mary Gillies; Catherine Newell; James Yarnell; Dexter Stowell; Judith Haskell; Rosalind Chapman; John Bayerlein; Marvin Ouwinga.



Mary C. Keniston poses beside panels of Mill Hill photographs at the Society monthly meeting in April where she was the featured speaker. Photo courtesy of Donald S. Brown.

MEMBER PROFILE

Mary C. Keniston was born on Bethel's Mill Hill March 21, 1921, the daughter of Millard and Frances Brown Clough of Bethel. She attended local schools and was graduated from Gould Academy in 1939. She married Rufus Rice in 1941 and they had four children. He died in 1969 and she married Earlon Keniston in 1973. Grandmother of seven, she is also very active in the community. She has held office in the Grange, Gould Academy Alumni Association and is a former treasurer of the West Parish Congregational Church. Her current activities include serving as secretary of the Songo Pond Cemetery Association, head of the Finance Committee for the Middle Intervale Meeting House Society, secretary of the Gould Academy Class of 1939, trustee of the West Parish Congregational Church and treasurer of the Bethel Democratic Committee. She was employed in several capacities before joining the staff in 1964 of Casco Northern Bank from which she retired in 1984 as branch assistant manager.

Mrs. Keniston has been very involved in the Society for several years, serving as Secretary and Clerk of the Trustees, as a Trustee and currently as Treasurer. She also is a member of the Investment and Special Projects committees and has served as a volunteer in a number of capacities. This spring she shared her extensive research on Mill Hill's history with members of the Society at the April monthly meeting.

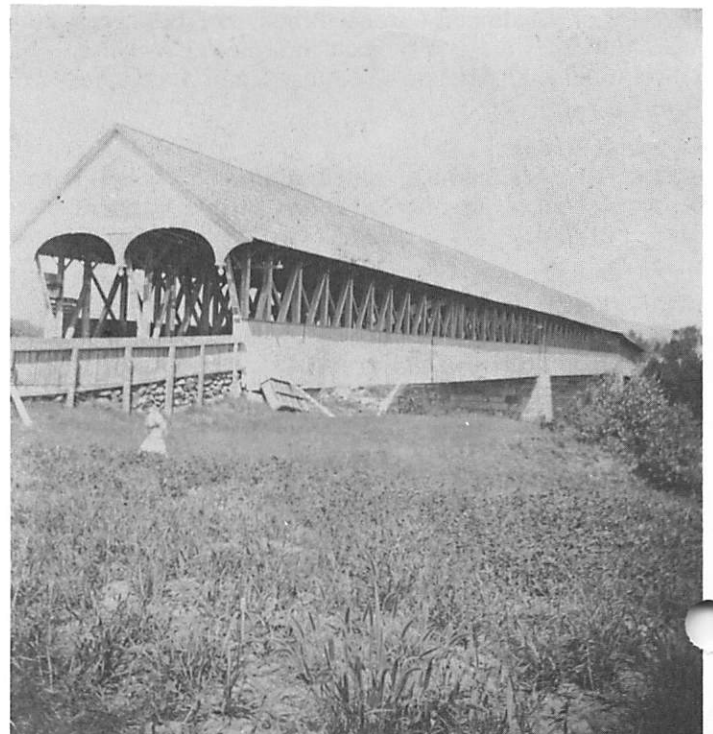
SOCIETY'S PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION IS VALUABLE RESOURCE

by Randall H. Bennett

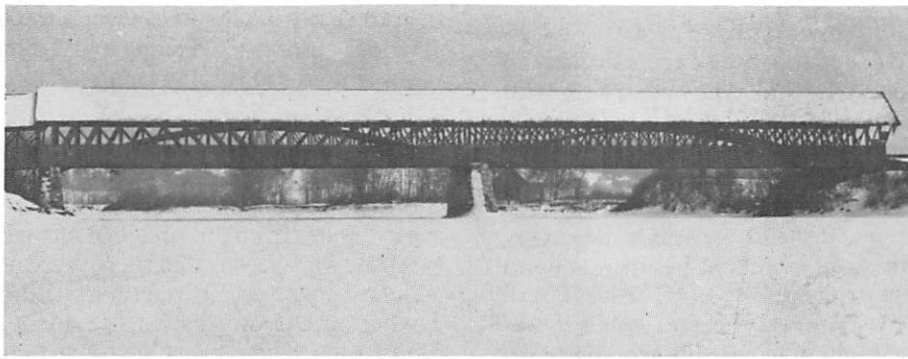
Of the Bethel Historical Society's many collections, its wealth of historical photographs ranks as one of its most valuable resources. The thousands of images now filed, catalogued, and stored within the converted Dr. Moses Mason House barn are significant documents of the local past, what Cornell Capa, Director of the International Center of Photography, has called, "... the most vital, effective, and universal means of communication of facts and ideas between peoples and nations."

A case in point which illustrates the role often played by the Society's photographic archives involves a series of images which document the demolition of the massive, double-lane covered bridge which spanned the Androscoggin River north of Bethel Hill from 1869 to 1927. Until now, general opinion was that this famed crossing was destroyed by floodwaters late in 1927. But thanks to this collection of photographs, presented to the Society by Charter Member Rosalind Rowe Chapman, the true story of this local landmark's disappearance can now be told. The several images show the exposed trusswork of the bridge, its roof and side-boards removed. Upstream had been built a temporary, single-lane bridge, which, in early November of 1927, was removed by floodwaters.

According to newspaper resources in the Society's Eva Bean Research Room, this three-span covered bridge (one section, on the Mayville end, was angled down from the level of the two major spans) was completed in February 1869 at a cost of \$35,000; much of this money was later collected in tolls. An issue of the original *Bethel Courier* makes mention of a bridge plan for this site by Bethel architect Thomas Holt, though there is no proof, as yet, that the same was utilized in raising the structure. In addition to these priceless photographs, the Society owns one of the large wooden pendants from the bridge portals.

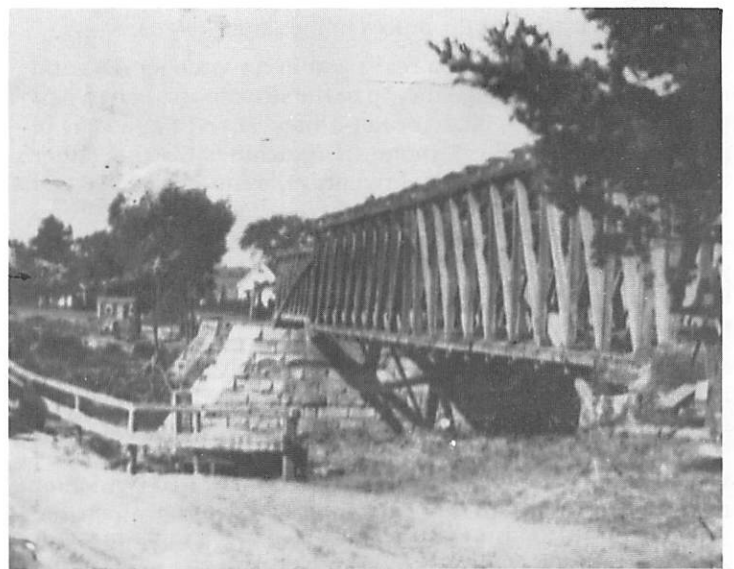
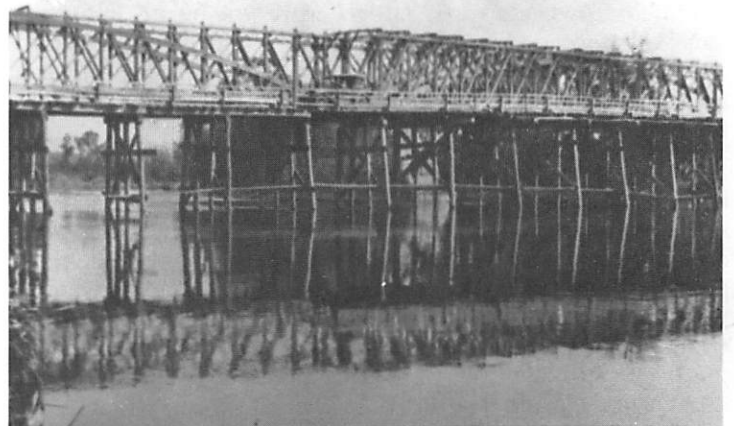


Androscoggin Covered Bridge, ca. 1890s



Androscoggin Covered Bridge, ca. 1900

Below: Four photographs which document the demolition of the Androscoggin covered bridge in 1927.



Father told me that he did not go to school except during the winter term after he was eight years old as he had to help with the farm work during the spring and fall, and he attended only the local country school until about the age of fourteen. It is a credit to rural school teachers for the showing they made in the limited time they had. My father must have had some excellent teachers and a natural ability and desire to learn as he was a very good man in handling figures, an excellent penman, a good reader, and I never knew him to misspell a word. Life was not all drudgery for children of his generation even though it was busy. It was good fishing and hunting practically everywhere in those days and in the spring there were maple sugar parties and cornhusking bees in the fall which were real fun.

When father was seventeen years old (1880), he went to work for William W. Mason of Bethel, who was quite an important man in town. "Bill" Mason, as he was always known, carried on quite an extensive meat business in the surrounding community and even extended it to Berlin, NH and became very prosperous. My father worked at the Mason farm for two or three years and lived with the family. He became quite expert at butchering and handling meat while there but did not follow it as a trade. I do not know what Father did next after leaving "Bill" Mason except I remember having heard him tell about working in the summer at the Locke farm just up the Sunday River valley from what was then known as "Swan's Corner" and later called "North Bethel." The Locke's had a big farm and took summer boarders from the city and it was the custom in those days before automobiles were invented to take picnic trips, mountain trips, etc., and father drove the team and was handyman for those expeditions. I think he also did logging jobs during the winter. I will leave the story of his doings at this point and come back to them later when I work out the story of my growing up.

I do not know what combination of circumstances caused my father to become acquainted with my mother as it is something I never heard them talk about. It may have been during the one or two years that Father ran a so-called "tin-peddler's cart" over the section of Oxford County which included the towns of Bethel, Hanover, Andover, Newry, Grafton and Upton. He received a back injury while working at the Locke farm and for two or three years was unable to do heavy work. During that time he travelled through the towns mentioned above with a horse drawn express wagon, carrying for sale commonly used household articles such as tinware pots and pans, sewing materials, and such other things as people ordinarily used in farming communities and frequently needed between their trips to the stores in the larger towns.

A trip to the store was a real event in my younger days and most families did not make a trip to the store more than two or three times a year, chiefly because they lacked the means of exchange which we call money. I remember that my father usually made a trip to Bethel twenty miles away each fall and carried with him one or more butchered hogs or beef creatures and some butter which he exchanged for flour, sugar, and a few other smaller grocery items; he practically always made another trip in the spring as he would be too busy during the summer to take the time for it.

I believe that it may have been during the time that Father made his home with his father at Grafton (when he was about 24 or 25 years old) that he decided that Cora Farrar was the "gal" for him; they were subsequently married in April of 1889 when he was 27 and she was 20. I also believe that right after they were married they started housekeeping at Mechanic Falls, ME; Father told me that he worked for a sawmill outfit during that first summer hauling out slabs and sticking lumber.

In the early winter he returned to Grafton and worked in the woods cutting and hauling logs. I think Mother helped with the cooking in the logging camp.

On March 7, 1890, my older brother Irving Addison Davis was born at my grandmother's house in Grafton. There were no doctors available in country towns in those days for births and ordinary ailments, especially if the town was more than six or eight miles from the village or city where one lived. The simple reason for this was that there were no telephones, and to get a doctor involved a trip either by horse or on foot to the place where the doctor lived to persuade him that he was needed, and then if you were fortunate enough to find him home instead of out on another case, a trip by horse drawn vehicle by him to attend to your needs. At many times of the year the roads were impassable because of mud or blocked by snow, so most births were accomplished with the help of other women in the neighborhood. My mother had no doctor in attendance at any of the births of her seven children as we lived about twenty miles from the nearest one.

For two or three years Father and Mother lived at Mechanic Falls during the summer and early fall, and in Grafton during each winter. At Mechanic Falls, he worked in sawmills and for a building mover where he got some experience on building foundation work. In Grafton his work was lumbering, part of the time for other operators and partly contracting jobs on his own account.

I was born on December 2, 1892 during a two-day heavy snowstorm at Grandmother Farrar's house in Grafton. My parents named me Leslie Ernest, probably for Mother's brother Arthur, whose middle name was Leslie, and for her youngest brother Ernest.

At some time between the birth of Irving and me or between my sister Gladys and me, Mother had another daughter who lived only a few hours. This birth was never recorded; in fact many live births did not get recorded in smaller towns in Maine. I discovered this fact to my surprise when I felt the necessity a few years ago of getting a birth certificate. In checking the old town clerk's records of vital statistics for the town of Grafton I found that the first entry of any birth in the town was in March 1892 and my own birth in December of that same year was the second. (Note: I have since seen a record of earlier birth, but it was not complete.)

About the time I was about two years old, Father and Mother sold out at Mechanic Falls and moved to Grafton permanently. They made some kind of deal with the people who owned the second farm north of Grafton Notch, in which they were to provide a home for a Mrs. Dow for a period of time, probably her lifetime, and in return they were to own the farm. I do not remember too much about Mrs. Dow as she had a room for her own use and stayed in it practically all the time except at meal time and she didn't like children too well anyway, or that is the impression my memory gives me. One thing about her stands out in my memory; she smoked a pipe; it was always a short stemmed clay pipe, called a T.D. pipe in those days; she was the only woman I ever saw who smoked until I was twenty or more years old.

The farm in Grafton was good land and had about forty acres or so in cleared fields and probably twenty or thirty acres of pasture in addition to a large wood lot. The climate in Grafton was so frosty and the growing season so short that only the hardiest crops could be raised, like oats, buckwheat, india wheat and potatoes. Some years were so frosty that we had trouble raising even green vegetables, so farming was largely restricted to hay and livestock, and in the winter the menfolks worked in the lumber woods.

The buildings on the farm were reasonably comfortable if you had plenty of wood to keep them warm in winter. They were unpainted and rather small by present standards.

After two or three years, Father had increased his livestock so the little old barn was no longer large enough nor convenient to house his animals so he built a new one.

My only surviving sister Gladys Estella was born at Grafton on June 13, 1895.

I have few recollections of things that happened when I was three and four years old, which is about as early in life as memory makes permanent images that can be recalled. I have a definite recollection of something that happened in March when I was three years old. We were having a birthday party for Irving, whose birthday was the 7th, and some of the neighbor boys were at our place; I remember playing in the old barn and the boys chasing each other around, probably playing "cops & robbers" or "settlers and Indians" and the game as usual got out of control; someone accidentally stuck a pitchfork through Irving's foot; the party ended right away while Mother fixed up his foot the best way she could.

I remember seeing the men tear down the old barn and raise the frame for the new one; I was about four years old when the new barn was built. I also recall riding to the sawmill with my father on a load of logs when I was about four years old.

Irving started going to school the fall after he turned five and Mother later told me that I was so lost without him to play with that she asked the teacher if she would take me on also, which the teacher was willing to do. I remember little of these early school days but I do recall that the teacher gave me a chalk box and short pieces of blackboard chalk to play with. I recall sitting on the floor and playing with the chalk box. I expect that after while she started to teach me the three "R's" as that was the limit of subject taught in rural schools fifty-five years ago (this was written in 1953). During all of my school years in Grafton, there were about ten pupils in the whole town of school age. There was no school conveyance and we walked about one and a quarter miles from our home to the schoolhouse.

I believe it might be interesting to write down some of the escapades that seemed to be the normal life of our family while in Grafton and I don't believe our family was much different than most other families in town.

When I was about three years old, my mother heard me

crying in the barn and went to discover the cause of it, and found me on the floor behind the horses, bleeding from a gash on my right jaw; probably the horses objected to my playing around their feet, and kicked me. Nobody knows as no one else was there and I don't remember this one, but the scar is still there.

When I was about four, I was playing around on top of Father's bench, and sat or fell on his mowing scythe, cutting a gash about four inches long on one cheek of my bottom; also I remember lying across my mother's lap while she patched up this cut with court plaster, which was first aid for all cuts in those days.

Another time while we were haying in the "old back field" as we called it, when I was about six or seven years old and was helping to tread the hay in the hayrack while Father pitched it up, I fell through the cut-out place in the side of the rack, where the wheels cut in (in order to turn short). The horses were moving along when it happened; the back wheel of the wagon ran over me about at my middle. It squeezed all the breath out of me, but that was all the damage I guess, as I remember Father picked me up and set me against a haycock to recover my breath while he kept on with his haying.

When I was seven years old, one of my uncles gave me a jack knife, and in the process of learning to use it, I cut my left forefinger so badly that a piece of the flesh on one side was separated from it nearly to the bone, but I didn't go to my mother with it as I was afraid she would take my knife away from me. It bled like a stuck pig, so I wrapped it up in my handkerchief for the rest of the afternoon. When I finally decided I had to go into the house it had been cut so long that Mother wasn't able to make a very good looking finger out of it with the limited equipment she had.

When I was five years old, I remember piling some shingles from the old barn which had been torn down, against the

SOCIETY OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

Alden T. Kennett, President; Marvin Ouwinga, Vice-President; Charles F. Raymond, Secretary and Clerk of the Trustees; Mary C. Keniston, Treasurer; Trustees, Donald G. Bennett, Donald S. Brown, Lynda H. Chandler, Edward H. Hastings, Margaret Joy Tibbetts.

Join the Bethel Historical Society dedicated to preserving and interpreting the local past.

Membership in the Society entitles you to:

- | | |
|---|--|
| (1) free admission to the museum | (5) quarterly publication |
| (2) special discounts at museum store | (6) reduced course fees |
| (3) preferred rate for meeting room rental | (7) voting rights in the Society |
| (4) special library and archival privileges | (8) special invitations to Society occasions |

(Please Print)

Name

Address

.....
Signature

Please check appropriate category and send your remittance to: Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217 (effective Jan. 1, 1987)

..... Sustaining (Individual) \$5

..... Contributing \$15

..... Patron \$30

..... Benefactor \$40.00

..... Students (under 18 years) \$2

..... Senior (over 55 years) \$3

..... Life over 55 years \$50.00 single

..... Life over 55 years \$75.00 couple

..... Life under 55 years \$100.00 single

..... Life under 55 years \$150.00 couple

..... Individual preference (any amount over \$5)

..... Corporate \$50



Dr. Edward (Sandy) D. Ives, director of the Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History speaks with participants in Bethel at the Oral History Workshop.

SOCIETY HOSTS ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

Last fall the Society hosted one of six workshops which were conducted around the State by Edward (Sandy) D. Ives, professor of folklore at the University of Maine and director of the Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History on the subject of oral history, the gathering of historical information through tape-recorded interviews. Approximately thirty people from throughout western Maine attended.

The workshop featured a thirty minute videotape produced especially for this project in which Dr. Ives explains the oral history process using portions of an actual interview with a river driver. Following the videotape, Ives led a discussion of the techniques, equipment, problems and uses of oral history field work. Workshop participants received a free general field work manual and interview guide. Support for this and all the other free workshops was provided by the Maine Humanities Council and Champion International Corporation.

These workshops are one aspect of a year long project in the humanities that built on the public enthusiasm for "From Stump To Ship," Alfred Ames' 1930s logging film that was shown last year throughout the State (in Bethel in October 1985). This follow-up project, "The Oral History Process at Work," began with tape-recorded interviews with former woodsmen/river drivers from the Machias River Region, some of whom were present when Ames made his historic film in the 1930s.

The Bethel Historical Society
P.O. Box 12
Bethel, Maine 04217



SUDBURY CANADA DAYS

Summer Heritage Festival

August 8-9, 1987

Dr. Moses Mason House and Grounds

For further information please

call (207) 824-2908

Published quarterly by the Bethel Historical Society, Stanley R. Howe, Editor. Please address all inquiries and suggestions to Editor, Bethel Historical Society Publications, Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217.

ISSN 0749-9108

(L. E. Davis Memoirs, continued from page 7)

corner of the house and setting them afire; Mother discovered it in time to save the house from being burned down. How much of a licking I got for that escapade I do not remember, but I surely deserved all that I got. Probably the psychologists of today will attempt to explain why children do things like that, but I doubt if they really know.

We lived rather close to nature in those days, and although we couldn't go to the meat market very often, we seemed to have meat whenever we needed it as wild game was plentiful.

Fishing was unbelievably good, and I remember many times coming home from school at night and having Mother tell Irving and me that she would like to have us go and catch a mess of trout, which pleased us very much, and which we were able to do whenever we had the time and needed fish.

Bears were fairly common also, and I remember seeing one chase our sheep nearly down to the barn from the pasture.

I am quite certain that it was the year 1900 that an event of great importance took place in our town. The first automobile ever seen by the townspeople came through the town. It happened on a Sunday afternoon in midsummer while many of the folks were gathered at the "upper school house" so-called, having a Sunday school meeting. The horses were hitched to the rail fence beside the building and meeting had just about begun when "The Thing" came puffing and clanging up the road from Bethel probably about 10 or 12 miles per hour; the meeting came to a sudden close as the horses bolted through the fence and got themselves generally tangled up.

This was a steam automobile with a canopy top and seats running lengthwise of the body on the sides except for the driver's seat and instead of a horn to sound, it had a bell similar to the ones on street cars. It didn't look much like its successors of today, but it was real progress in transportation. (To be continued in the next issue).

**U.S. POSTAGE
PAID**

**PERMIT NO. 8
BETHEL, MAINE
04217**